

BOTTLE SAFETY AND PREPARATION POLICY

As young children (particularly those under 12 months) are still developing their immune system; they are more susceptible to food borne illnesses and infection. This therefore makes it imperative that education and care services implement and maintain the highest level of hygiene practices. Our Service will ensure that safe practices are consistently maintained for handling, storing, preparing and heating breast milk and formula, and handling bottles and teats.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and Procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

PURPOSE

To ensure our Service maintains a safe and hygienic environment for all infants and toddlers requiring a bottle, educators will prepare bottles in a safe and hygienic matter.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

During their first year of life, babies are at their most vulnerable to viruses, bacteria, and parasitic infections, due to their immune system not yet being fully developed. Unsafe or careless food handling practices can therefore lead to anything from a mild attack of thrush to a more serious condition of gastroenteritis, all of which are similar to food poisoning and can cause vomiting and diarrhoea, and subsequent dehydration.

To ensure that bottles are consistently prepared in a safe and hygienic manner educators will adhere to Service procedures at all times.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ MANAGEMENT WILL ENSURE:

- educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy
- families are aware of this *Bottle Safety Preparation Policy*
- educators are aware of and strictly adhere to the procedures for preparing, heating and storing bottles of formula and breast milk
- procedures for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles are strictly adhered to
- infants over 6 months of age (or if instructed by the parents prior to 6 months of age) are given small amounts of cooled boiled water in addition to breastmilk or formula as required
- educators give infants or children bottles before going to bed (in a cot or bed) if this is part of their routine
- infants are given only breast milk, formula, or cooled boiled water: They are not given fruit juice in their bottle due to the increase risk of tooth decay
- ensure families are familiar with their responsibilities in accordance with this policy.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- implement safe food handling practices
- wash hands thoroughly, gloves are required if touching the teat is required.

- store all bottles in an appropriate area for food preparation that complies with the food safety standards for kitchens and food preparation areas
- adhere to the procedure for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles
- provide infants over 6 months of age with small amounts of cooled boiled water in addition to breast milk or formula
- ensure infants and children are not given fruit juice in their bottle due to the increase risk of tooth decay
- give bottle-fed infants or children their bottles before going to bed or when their routine requires
- rinse children's bottles thoroughly after use and placed in their basket for parents' collection
- adhere to each child's feeding routine
- document the amount of milk each infant consumed including the time of feeds
- communicate regularly with families about infant and children's feeding patterns and routines

FAMILIES WILL:

- read and comply with the policies and procedures of the Service
- be informed during orientation that children's bottles, lids, milk separators, must be clearly labelled with the child's name
- label bottles or zip lock bags containing breast milk with the date of preparation or date of expression
- bring enough sterilised bottles filled with cool boiled water each day to meet their child's requirements.
- supply breast milk in clearly labelled, multiple small quantities to prevent wastage
- supply formula measured out correctly into labelled powder separation containers
- provide a labelled bottle(s) for use at the Service for children filled with their choice of milk (dairy, soy, almond, oat, coconut)
- be encouraged to communicate regularly with educators about children's bottle and feeding requirements
- not put fruit juice in children's bottles

BOTTLES, TEATS, AND DUMMIES

Our service will not sterilise infants' bottles, teats and dummies however, we recognise it is important to remember not to touch any part that will go into the baby's mouth with your hands.

Bottles, teats and dummies must be labelled and placed in the child's bottle basket upon drop off.

Educators and Staff will ensure bottles, teats and dummies will be rinsed and returned to the child's bottle basket after feeding.

It is the responsibility of the families to ensure bottles, teats and dummies are taken home and sterilised.

PREPARING FORMULA

Before preparing formula

- Ensure your hands and the bottle preparation area are clean
- If touching the teat is required, gloves must be worn
- Follow child's routine for preparing the water (e.g. water to be warmed)
- Families will bring enough bottles and formula to the service daily to meet their child's needs

When preparing infant formula always closely follow protocol: In general:

- always wash hands thoroughly prior to preparing bottles
- without touching the teat shake the bottle well to mix the contents, if touching the teat needs to be touched gloves must worn
- if a bottle is not needed immediately, made-up formula should be cooled and stored in the fridge

Heating bottles

- Heat bottles once only
- Do not allow a bottle to cool and then reheat as this can allow germs to grow
- Stand the bottle in a container of hot water for no more than 15 minutes
- Before feeding the infant, check the temperature of the milk by letting a small drop fall on the inside of your wrist- it should feel warm or even a little cool
- Do not microwave breast milk or bottles
- Do not refreeze thawed breast milk
- Discard any milk that has not been used

STORING BREASTMILK AND FORMULA

For safe storage of formula and breast milk, refrigerators must be kept at 5°C or below and should have a non-mercury thermometer to monitor the temperature.

- Formula or breast milk must be kept refrigerated or frozen if not being immediately consumed

- Whenever possible, make up formula as it is needed. Formula should not be refrigerated for more than 24 hours
- Any remaining formula should be thrown out if an infant does not finish a bottle: It should not be frozen or reheated
- Prior to placing bottle in the fridge staff will check that it/they are labelled with the child's name

BREAST MILK CAN BE STORED IN SEVERAL WAYS, WHICH INCLUDE:

1. refrigerated for no more than no more than 72 hours at 5°C or lower (5°C is the typical temperature of a standard fridge)
2. store breast milk on a shelf of the refrigerator, not in the door
3. frozen in a separate freezer section of a refrigerator for up to 3 months at a temperature of -18°C. If being frozen in a freezer compartment inside the refrigerator (as opposed to a freezer with a separate door), the breast milk should only be stored for 2 weeks.

FROZEN BREAST MILK CAN BE THAWED:

1. in the refrigerator and used within 24 hours
2. standing the bottle in a container of lukewarm water and used straight away

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The *Bottle Safety Preparation Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, staff, educators and management.

SOURCES

Australian Breastfeeding Association www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

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Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. [Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood](#).

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Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). Eat for health: Infant feeding guidelines: Information for health workers.

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ECA Code of Ethics. (2016).

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).

Food Standards Australia – www.foodstandards.gov.au

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (5th Ed.). Australia: Commonwealth of Australia. NSW Government. (n.d.).

NSW Ministry of Health. (2014). Caring for children birth to 5 years: Food, nutrition and learning experiences. <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/health/Publications/caring-for-children-manual.pdf>

Safe Food and Health Service Executive. (2013). How to prepare your baby’s bottle.

[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

REVIEW

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